

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2003

Contact: Kim Baker

(209) 588-8905

## Find A Holiday Getaway at Columbia State Historic Park

Looking for a place to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the commercialized holiday season? Columbia State Historic Park is the place to visit. The park is located in the Sierra foothills near Sonora and is an easy day trip from just about anywhere in central California.

This preserved gold rush town has been a State Historic Park since 1945, and the concessionaires, volunteers and locals in town put their heart into creating a enjoyable holiday experience that harkens back to a simpler time.

On the first two weekends of December (December 6, 7, 13 and 14), the town comes alive with the spirit of Christmas past. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each Saturday and Sunday, trained park docents dress in costume from the 1850s and roast chestnuts and heat cider over an open fire for the enjoyment of park visitors. This Miner's Christmas celebration features stories, songs, and a piñata. Visitors to the shops in town can make candles or watch candy canes made the old fashioned way. The stagecoach runs through town throughout the day, as it has since the 1850s when it made the daily run to the mint in San Francisco, and carolers roam the streets.

Beginning at 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, the town glows with luminarias as Las Posadas is presented. In this miner's version of the classic parade through town in search of a manger, the wise men are replaced by the characters of the old town of Columbia, and the angel stands atop one of the historic town buildings.

The highlight of the season is the annual Lamplight Tour (December 5 and 6), presented by the park volunteers and docents. The tour is \$25 per person and is a fundraiser to support the park's educational programs. Reservations are required. In this 20th year of the event, guides lead visitors through the town by lamplight for a peek into the buildings and streets of the town as it was during the Christmas of 1856. At the finale, The Columbia Brass Band, plays historic instruments and serenades visitors to the Eagle Cottage for an old fashioned refreshments and music.

For information on the Miner's Christmas, Lamplight Tour, or any park activities, call 209-588-9128, or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov). The Columbia Chamber of Commerce can be reached at 209-532-1672 or [www.columbiacalifornia.com](http://www.columbiacalifornia.com).